



Vietnam Declares the End of the Bird Flu Epidemic

After more than a month without any new outbreaks, Vietnam has declared the bird flu over. Although the common practice for announcing the end of an epidemic is usually 21 days after the last known infection, Vietnam extended the period to 30 days. There are some concerns about the announcement due to the H5N1 virus- related death of a Vietnamese boy just 2 weeks ago. Although he was infected in the beginning of

March, it is still unclear how the boy was infected. A big question also remains whether a connection exists between human influenza and the bird flu, and if human-to-human transmission is possible. Other countries affected by the bird flu, such as Taiwan, have not yet officially declared the epidemic over. The H5N1 virus has killed 23 people and resulted in the culling of over 100 million fowl in Asia.

Rise in Dengue Fever in Indonesia

Cases of Dengue Fever are on the rise in Southeast Asia. Dengue Fever is a hemorrhagic fever that is spread by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, a day-feeding mosquito that prefers to feed on humans. Dengue Fever is characterized by a sudden fever, severe headache, muscle and/or joint pain, low white blood cell and blood platelet count, and hemorrhagic manifestations. Occasionally, it can produce shock and hemorrhage, leading to death. From January 1st 2004 to March 22nd 2004, the Ministry of Health reported 40,337 cases of Dengue



Fever in Indonesia, including 507 deaths. This is a rise from 23,857 cases and 367 dead reported on March 3rd, 2004. Actions are being taken by local health authorities to reduce the population of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that spread the disease. These actions include larviciding, space spraying and informing the community on how to protect themselves and what they can do to prevent the mosquitoes from breeding in and around their homes. The World Health Organization is working closely with the Ministry of Health to control the outbreak.

A Case Report Utilizing the DoD Directory of Public Health Laboratory Services

A recent incident of food poisoning at a cafeteria illustrates how the Directory of Public Health Laboratory Services can be utilized to quickly locate an appropriate laboratory. Several labs linked by this system contributed to the quick response and resolution of this problem.

Interviews with people who had become sick revealed that they had all consumed a tuna dish prepared in the cafeteria. Samples of the tuna were sent to the Division of Microbiology at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) to culture and identify any microorganism associated with food poisoning. An additional concern was that histamine might have been the cause of the problem. Bacterial contamination

converts normal amounts of histidine in fish tissue to histamine. Histamine is related to a variety of fish-borne food poisonings known collectively as scombroid poisoning.

A search of the on-line directory led to consultation with the Food Analysis Diagnostic Laboratory at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC), Ft Sam Houston TX. Analyses performed by the FADL group detected and quantitated an amount of histamine much larger than the level considered sufficient to produce toxic symptoms in most individuals.

The capabilities and rapid response of a variety of labs provided meaningful data to clinicians.